

WESTERN HEMISPHERE TRAVEL INITIATIVE

THE BASICS



U.S. Department
of State



Homeland
Security

What is the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI)?

The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative requires all travelers to and from the United States, Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda to have a passport or other accepted document that establishes the bearer's identity and citizenship to enter or re-enter the United States.

Why is it being implemented?

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA) mandated that the U.S. Departments of Homeland Security and State develop and implement a plan to require U.S. citizens and foreign nationals to present a passport or other appropriate identity and citizenship documentation when entering the United States.

The goal of this program is to strengthen border security and facilitate entry into the United States for U.S. citizens and legitimate international visitors.

Who will WHTI affect?

The travel initiative will affect all *United States citizens entering or re-entering the United States*.

It will also affect *certain foreign nationals* who currently are not required to present a passport to travel to the United States, namely most Canadian citizens, citizens of the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda and Mexican citizens.

When will the initiative go into effect?

This initiative will be rolled out in phases, providing as much advance notice as possible to the affected public to enable them to meet the terms of the proposed timeline.

The timeline will be as follows:

- **January 23, 2007** — Beginning January 23, 2007, all persons, including U.S. citizens, traveling by air between the United States and Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda will be required to present a valid passport to enter (or re-enter) the United States.
- **As early as January 1, 2008** — A requirement for U.S. citizens traveling between the United States and Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda by land or sea (including ferries), will be implemented.

What other documents will be acceptable?

Passports are the document of choice because of security features and internationally accepted standards for international travel. However, the Department of Homeland Security is proposing the U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner's Document, NEXUS Air Card or U.S. Permanent Resident Card as other acceptable travel documents to enter the United States when arriving by air.

Where do I find out more information on WHTI?

Department of Homeland Security, www.dhs.gov
Department of State, www.travel.state.gov

AS OF JANUARY 23, **2007**



All persons, including U.S. citizens, must present a passport or other acceptable identity/citizenship document * to enter the United States when arriving by air.



* Other acceptable identity/citizenship documents include the U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner's Document, NEXUS Air Card or U.S. Permanent Resident Card.